California School for the Blind



1860~ ~1986

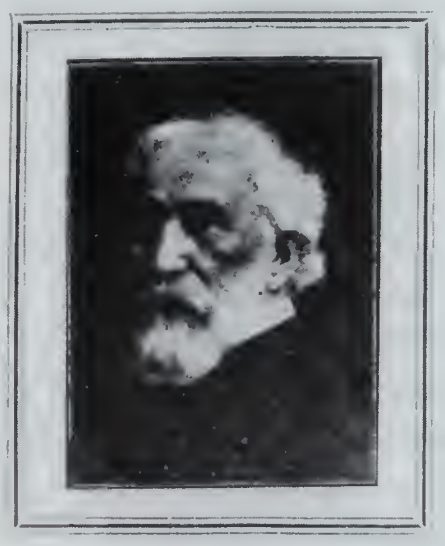
The School Song

Where Berkeley hills are glowing
Beneath the sun's warm rays,
And the soft breeze gently blowing
Sinks through the purple haze,
There stand those red-tiled buildings
Where our feet do often tread
And you'll always find us singing
Hurrah! for the silver and red!

CHORUS

Then hurrah for the banner of silver and red
May it forever, o'er our true hearts spread
To its bright colored hue
We'll always be true
And hurrah! for the banner of silver and red.

The silver stands for gladness
The garnet just for joy,
Its sight should take all sadness
From every girl and boy;
It stands for happy school days
And the days that soon have fled,
And you'll always find us singing
Hurrah! for the silver and red.



DR. WARRING WILKINSON

History 1860 - 1950

The education of blind children in California began in a small wood frame building on Tehama Street in San Francisco, in 1860. A group of prominent, influential women met on the 17th of March, 1860, to organize a Society for the Instruction and Maintenance of the Indigent Deaf and Dumb, and the Blind in California. Mrs. Frances Augusta Clark is given credit as the leader of this movement. She later became president of

the Board of Managers and first Principal of the School until 1865. There were one blind and three deaf mute students enrolled at Tehama Street. These quarters were temporary and used only until a larger building at 16th and Mission was completed. This building was opened on May 1, 1860, by Mrs. Clark and the Society. Mrs. Clark's first report, dated 1861, noted that enrollment had increased to seventeen deaf and five blind students.

Dr, Warring Wilkinson was brought from New York in December, 1965, to be Principal of the dual institution. Dr. Wilkinson began a movement to make the school wholly state-supported rather than privately supported. He also recognized, at this time, a need for more growth and space for the institution. In 1866 there were 48 students enrolled, and the Board of Directors was instructed to attend to the removal of the institution from San Francisco to a larger, more suitable location. Thus began a large advertising campaign within a 75-mile radius of San Francisco, in search of the perfect site.

In February, 1867, the Commissioners, with the approval of the Board of Directors, chose a site across the Bay, in the County of Alameda. It was located north of the Township of Oakland and east of the soon to be incorporated Township of Berkeley. A 130 acre parcel of land was bought from John Kearney for the sum of $12,100 in gold coins. Forty of the acres were gentle sloping grassy plains with a barn and fences. The remaining ninety acres rose steeply to Grizzly, Baldy, and many other peaks. This property was adjacent to a tract belonging to the College of California (later to become the University of California.)

Ground was broken on July 29, 1867, for the new institution. The cornerstone was laid on September 26, 1867. The new building was described as a fine example of the institutional architecture of the day--a Victorian Gothic style. The new school was concentrated into one large stone building which contained schoolrooms, dormitories, and kitchen and dining facilities. At first the grounds were simply unimproved

fields, but later a garden was cultivated around the one building, with the remainder of the grounds left in their original natural state.

A fire of unknown origin totally destroyed the new building on January 17, 1875. It was ironic that precautions taken to prevent a recurrence of the type of damage caused to the unfinished building by an earthquake, in 1868, were now the very factors contributing to the rapid spread of the fire that destroyed the structure. Nothing was saved, not even Dr. Wilkinson's private library. A week of floods and storms complicated matters even more. Temporary quarters were sought for the housing and education of the students. The directors, with the aid and contributions of forty local businessmen, constructed several wooden buildings in record time to be used temporarily during the time needed to build a new facility. The school was reopened in April, 1875, in its temporary buildings.

Ground was broken for the new buildings on April 30, 1877. Dr. Wilkinson requested that the new plan provide for indefinite expansion of the fa-

cility. The site now had an Educational Building, two dormitories for boys, two for girls, a kitchen and dining room, a laundry, a stable, a workshop, and a private residence for the principal.

In 1890, the Education building was completed as originally planned, dignified by a 160 foot tower and an assembly hall that was 112 by 125 feet in length. A clock purchased from the Seth Thomas Clock Company was placed in the tower.

On April 18, 1906, the great San Francisco earthquake did some damage to the school, but there was no fire. The first sharp jolt at 5:13 a.m. wakened and frightened everyone. The second, more severe shock, caused some chimneys to fall and others to crack. The tower's peak and slate roof apparently suffered most; there were also many interior cracks. The main walls held firm, and some departments showed no effect at all. So school went on as usual.

In the same year, 1906, an amendment to the Political Code changed the name from the Asylum for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind, to the California Institution for the Deaf and Blind. The Code amendment also established the institution as

a part of the California State school system, with the exception that it would not derive any revenue from public school funds, and had as its object the education of the deaf and the blind who, by reason of their infirmities, could not be taught in the regular public schools. In 1914 the Legislature voted to substitute the term "School" for "Institution," and the facility was then called the California School for the Deaf and Blind. At this same time, the chief executive officer was given the title of "Principal Superintendent" rather than "Principal Teacher."

Dr. Warring Wilkinson had retired in 1910 as Principal Teacher and was given the title Superintendent Emeritus. Douglas Keith, head business administrator under Wilkinson, was next appointed to the post; and thus began a year of turmoil and troubles. In 1912, Laurence Edwards Milligan was selected by the Board to be Principal Teacher. Mr. Milligan believed, as did Dr. Wilkinson, that complete separation of deaf and blind students was needed and should be effected at once; and he held that in any future construction or al-

terations such separation should be borne in mind. But once again, as during Dr. Wilkinson's time, efforts failed. Twelve long years of struggle were to pass before the dream of separation was to be realized.

In 1921 and 1922, some very important milestones in the history of the school took place. In 1921, a bill passed by the legislature placed the school under the joint authority of the State Director of Education and the State Board of Education. This provision further removed the school from political influences and put it in the hands of experienced educators. A subsequent Act provided for the creation of an institution to be known as the California School for the Blind, setting aside a portion of the site belonging to the California School for the Deaf and the Blind for the use of the newly created blind school; but unfortunately no appropriations were made for funds for construction of such a facility at this time.

Mr. H. C. Harter was appointed Acting Principal of the newly separated School for the Blind on January 30,

1922. On July 1 of that same year, Dr. Richard S. French was appointed as Principal Superintendent of the School for the Blind and Dr. Newel Perry was appointed as Director of Advanced Studies. The two schools had to continue sharing facilities for several more years while a building program was in progress. Construction began in 1923, and formal separation was achieved in July of 1929, with the completion and dedication of the new Educational building.

Buildings on the new school site consisted of a school building built in 1929, with an additional wing added in 1931. This building contained classrooms, special music facilities, library, typing room, auditorium with pipe organ and high fidelity sound equipment, and administrative offices. Three residence halls were constructed: one for girls, in 1925; one for boys, in 1929; and later, a separate residence for small children.

The early educational program for blind children was organized along conventional lines, with the use of embossed print and the point systems constituting the main differential. Chil-



Dr. Richard S. French
Superintendent 1922-49

dren were instructed in all academic areas from kindergarten through ninth grade. Vocational studies such as piano tuning, broom making, and cane chair weaving were offered along with homemaking skills, music, and swimming. Recognition of the Department of the Blind between 1912 and 1920 had provided for an expansion of the educational programs and paved the way for the formal separation of the School for the Blind from the School for the Deaf. Since the time of separation, the supervision of the school has been under the State Department of Education, administered by the Superintendent of the School.

In 1949 a new school department was established for the teaching of educable deaf-blind children of California. A new building, known as the Helen Keller Building, was constructed and dedicated. Governor Earl Warren and Helen Keller were present for the dedication. The final construction on the campus was a dining facility for the use of the total studentbody, in 1957. The old gymnasium, built in 1915, was assigned to the School for the Blind at this same time.





Education of Deaf-Blind Children

In the 19th Century there were approximately fifty-four deaf-blind persons who lived in America, according to William Wade of Pennsylvania, a friend of Helen Keller and other deaf-blind persons. At this time, sixteen were in school. They attended either schools for the deaf or schools for the blind. Perkins School for the Blind and the new York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf each had three students.

In 1891, it was recommended by the American Association of the Instructors of the Blind that deaf-blind pupils be educated in schools for the blind.

Perkins School for the Blind established the first special department for the deaf-blind in 1933. From 1937 to 1957, seven other departments were organized. In 1937, the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind opened the second deaf-blind department.

Richard E. French, the Superintendent of the California School for the Blind (commonly known as "C.S.B."), sought legislation as early as 1936 to admit deaf-blind children into the

school. His secretary, Marie Clisham, played a major role in this effort. The school was not given authorization until 1943 to admit the deaf-blind. They were the third school in the country to establish a deaf-blind program and did so the year they received authorization.

The deaf-blind students were taught separately in the younger children's cottage. The school decided to expand the building in 1948, and the addition was completed in 1949. Upon completion, Helen Keller came to dedicate the building, and it was named the Helen Keller Unit.

Miss Inis B. Hall was the first teacher of the deaf-blind at the California School for the Blind. She earned a reputation for teaching the deaf-blind at the Perkins School for the Blind, and through her leadership helped establish the first deaf-blind department in the country at Perkins. She was a trained teacher of the deaf who had learned from Sophia Alcorn how to teach speech through the Vibration method known as Tadoma.

Jackie Coker was the first deaf-blind student to be graduated from

C.S.B. She attended the school from 1946 to 1949 and entered the school as a high school sophomore. There were seven deaf-blind students attending the program at that time. Jackie went on to college and now works at the Department of Rehabilitation in Sacramento.

In 1964-65, a rubella epidemic hit the United States. Prior to this time an estimated 140 deaf-blind were born per year, but the number of deaf-blind children born in the epidemic years rose to 2,000. In 1968, the C.S.B. Deaf--Blind Department doubled in size and doubled again in 1969, due to the epidemic.

In 1969, the Deaf-Blind Institute was established for the parents of deaf-blind children. Parents would come and stay at the school with their deaf-blind children. It was not only a time for education but a time for sharing among people who had a common bond because of their children. The Institute was not continued after the School moved to Fremont.

Evelyn Greenleaf became the first principal of the C.S.B. Deaf-Blind Department, in 1970. She had taught in the Department for eleven years prior to taking the position.

In 1971, the Deaf-Blind Assessment Center was established at the California School for the Blind. Deaf-blind children from the Southwestern Region (California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, the Trust Territories of the Pacific, and the Navajo Nation) came to the School for a short period of time to be assessed. The Assessment Center closed at the end of the 1982-83 school year, due to loss of Federal funding.

A career preparation program was developed for deaf-blind teenagers by Charles Zemalis and Willie Evans in 1974. Deaf-blind students worked in the School's Infirmary, in the pre-career workshop, and other places on campus, and later off campus at businesses in the community.

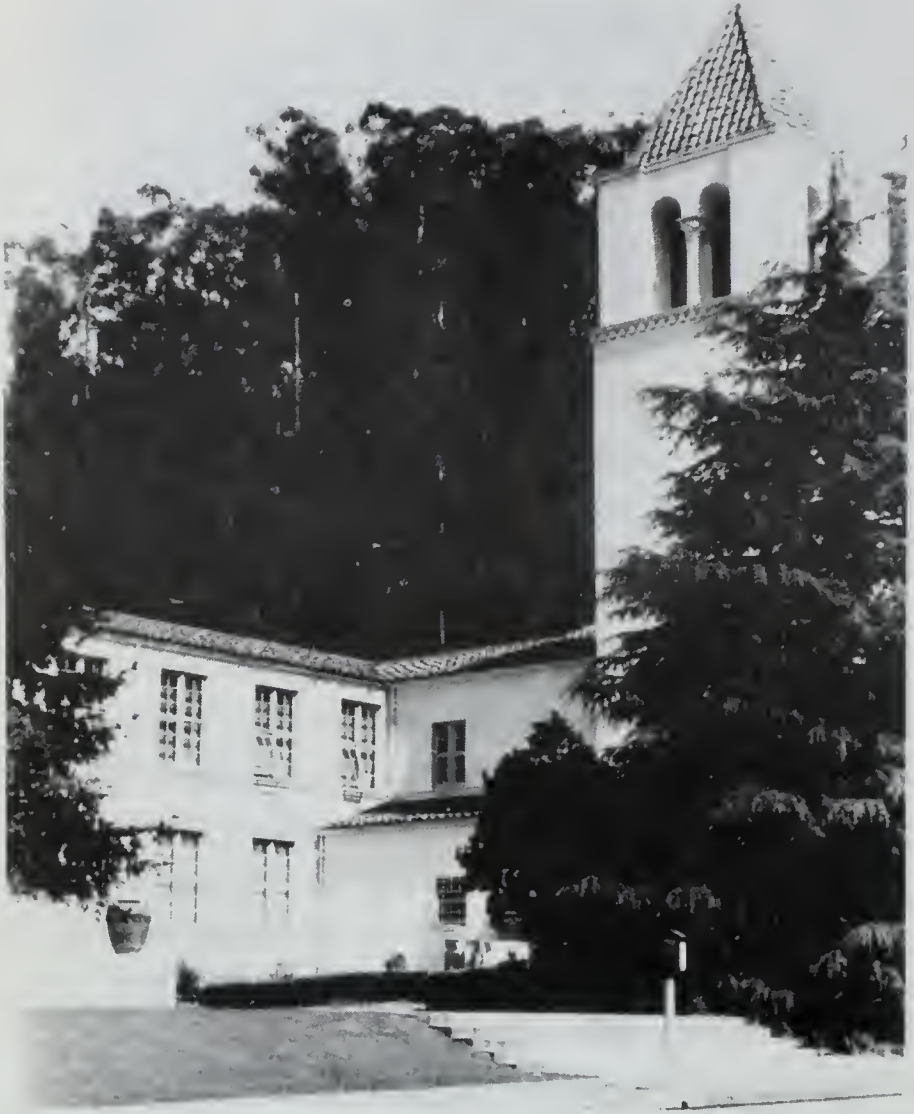
The School moved to Fremont from Berkeley in 1980, and deaf-blind classes are still in operation on the campus.



Opportunities in the Sixties

The sixties initiated a decade of the confirmation of good practice, during which the enrollment reached its peak (1965--167) because of the outstanding program for the kindergarten through the ninth grade, that focused primarily on those children who were academically inclined and could progress in the local or Berkeley/Oakland public high schools. On campus, music, homemaking/crafts, and physical education programs developed skills that had been dormant. The variety of recreational activities were supplemented by community resources and volunteers which provided opportunities that were not avail-

able on the campus of the California School for the Blind. Home visitations by staff, and regional conferences with parents were instituted. Counseling services were available to the parents of pre-school blind children in Southern California, as well as institutes in Berkeley. Closer relationships were established with the parents in order to encourage partnership responsibility for the education of their children, who now were more frequently returned home for weekends and holidays at State expense. Instruction began to emphasize techniques in independent living skills, also mobility and orientation to the environment that included home and community. Field services were extended to former students by staff in cooperation with State rehabilitation counselors. Childcare staff was expanded so that dormitory counselors were available twenty-four hours per day. The alumni continued an active interest in the nature of the enrollment change and the curriculum adaptations.



Preparation for the Seventies

California's commitment to the education of all children caused more and more referrals to C.S.B. to educate the multihandicapped children with visual impairments. Because of the proliferation of programs for blind children in their home districts, the C.S.B. enrollment began to include those children with multiple handicaps in addition to the classes for deaf-blind children (established in the 1940's). Staff was recruited nationwide and curriculum adjusted to each child's individual needs. As children with a wider range of impairments were included, the staff, at all levels, was challenged to develop appropriate techniques and revise curriculum to include prevocational training. Close working relationships with school districts evolved to provide for children who formerly would not have been enrolled. The length of enrollment at C.S.B. became flexible, dependent upon annual assessments. As parents became active in elementary education generally, similar interest developed in the C.S.B. program.

Challenge of the Seventies

The nature of the referrals to C.S.B. caused the program to go beyond the traditional role of the residential school for the blind, and the staff provided leadership in the development and application of comprehensive forms of diagnostic and educational services for blind children. Extensive educational assessment of deaf-blind children was initiated, not only for those enrolled at C.S.B. but for other referrals from California and the Southwest; and by 1979, visually handicapped children with other impairments were being included in diagnostic assessments. With the focus on children with multiple impairments, the enrollment receded--thirty percent were deaf-blind. The staff required to serve these multihandicapped children was enlarged in view of the wider range of techniques necessary. Staff and curricula maintained a highly flexible posture and clinical in approach in order to meet the changing needs characteristic of the children enrolled.

Construction Crises/Opportunity

In 1922 the School for the Blind program was reorganized and a plant completed in 1931, with small additions in 1945, 1957, and 1971. Unfortunately, the earlier construction did not meet the stipulation of the "earthquake" code and subsequently the fire code standards. Further, the hillside terrain and two-story construction prevented enrollment of children with limited mobility (wheelchairs), and allocations for repairs had not kept abreast of plant deterioration. In 1973, the Department of Education determined that the school plant was to be relocated. Although many of the staff opposed leaving Berkeley, emotions were set aside, and they became involved in the preparation of plans for an appropriate residential school for visually impaired children with multiple handicaps. Even though many valid recommendations were included, the resistance by the alumni and citizens of Berkeley to relocating the school to a truck garden acreage in Fremont surfaced and was hotly debated. Upon completion of the Fremont construction, the school was moved; the Berkeley

site has become the Clark Kerr Campus of the University of California. The residences and classrooms that had housed the deaf-blind children have been identified as the Helen Keller Building, and a family of redwoods has been dedicated as the Lowenfeld Grove. The Fremont facility is now recognized as the best in the world for visually handicapped children.



Redwood carvings
auditorium - Berkeley
Sergeant Johnson 1932

NEWEL PERRY:
Pupil, Scholar, Teacher, Leader

The historical significance of this School cannot be fully grasped without at least a few words concerning its most prominent pupil. The example he set and the influence he engendered made possible its scholastic excellence and the astounding achievements of its graduates during the three-quarters of a century it remained in Berkeley.

Newel Perry, who lost his sight at the age of eight and entered the School before the age of ten, was one of about fifty blind children in an institution devoted primarily to educating deaf children. The blind were but a small minority. Two school rooms, two good teachers, and three or four pianos constituted the School's equipment. His teachers must have been good ones, since in spite of meager equipment, many acquired the groundwork of an elementary education. It is difficult to realize that in 1883, the year he entered the School, this was the sole agency for the blind in California.

Newel Perry is believed to have been the first blind person to have done it--to have won permission to attend regular classes at Berkeley High School. He was the first blind person accepted for enrollment at the University of California. He became an outstanding mathematician during his undergraduate days. Following his graduation, he received a heretofore unheard-of appointment to a full time instructorship in mathematics at the University. Interspersed in this period, he also held an instructorship in mathematics at the University of Chicago.

Had he lacked the gallant approach to living, he might never have resolved to travel alone across continental America and a wide expanse of ocean to sojourn in both Zurich, Switzerland, and Munich, Germany; nor would he have traversed unaided a great part of the European continent. Yet, at the turn of the century, these things he did in quest of a higher degree in mathematics from a European university--an academic qualification more highly prized in his younger days than in more recent times. Moreover, he supported himself a good



DR. NEWEL PERRY

part of the way by the simple expedient of teaching English to Swiss and German groups. They found it a fascinating undertaking to learn a foreign language orally from a blind man. He was awarded his Ph.D. while studying at the University of Munich.

On his return to the United States, New York City was the main scene of his activities for nearly a decade, where nearly all the while he was associated with either Columbia University or New York University. It was in the New York State Legislature that Dr. Perry undertook his first completely successful great legislative effort in behalf of the blind. In 1907 he lobbied through both chambers and persuaded Charles Evans Hughes, then Governor of New York, and later Chief Justice of the United States, to sign a bill providing the first appropriated Reader Funds for blind college students anywhere in the United States.

Dr. Perry returned to California in 1912. The School for the Blind in Berkeley had reached a decisive crossroads in education. The organized alumni of the School, which he had helped organize

in 1898, were demanding the return of Newel Perry's progressive influence. The School itself and the Governor of the State wanted him back.

To lead the way in opening opportunities for blind people in higher education became an intensified campaign for Dr. Perry at this juncture of his life. Owing to his influence and persuasion, the California Legislature established in the State's regular budget for education a regularly appropriated Reader Fund for blind students attending public high schools, colleges and universities within the State. Dr. Perry was designated as Director of Advanced Studies for the Blind of the entire State after the creation of this fund. The always widening responsibilities of this position occupied a great part of his energies down to the day of his compulsory retirement in 1947, at the age of seventy-three.

At the time of his retirement, seventy-eight of his students had been graduated from colleges and universities and had succeeded in a wide variety of vocations and professions. His former students began to turn up all over the

State and in other parts of the country as successful lawyers, business people, civil servants, farmers, judges, employment specialists, social workers, legislators, salesmen, osteopaths, chiropractors, and as jobholders of various descriptions and in an extending array of different occupations. All of this occurred at a time when the blind were considered among the unemployable.

During his more than thirty years as teacher and Director of Advanced Studies at the California School for the Blind, where he prodded literally hundreds of his students, his "boys and girls," into seeking their full potentials through higher education, he fashioned a foundation of limitless possibilities available to most blind people today.

While education was his prescription for most ills besetting the blind, convinced, as he was, that it offered the greatest promise for the overcoming of its handicap, he did not forget those less fortunate.

Dr. Perry was the author of California's Aid to the Blind Laws, the most liberal and self-help laws in the na-

tion. At his insistence, the position of Field Worker was established at the California School for the Blind. Its purpose was that of following the graduates and former pupils of the School into their home communities to assist them in procuring remunerative employment and to otherwise aid them in becoming active members of their communities. A few months before his death, February 12, 1961, at the age of eighty-seven, he created the Lillie Perry Foundation for the Blind, Inc., named after his beloved wife, for the purpose of providing long-term, low-interest loans to young men and women who are blind, and seeking to go into business for themselves. He left the bulk of his estate to the Foundation.






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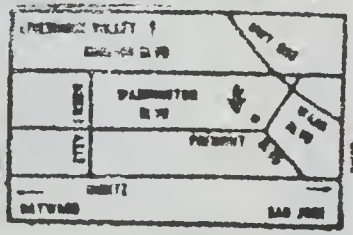
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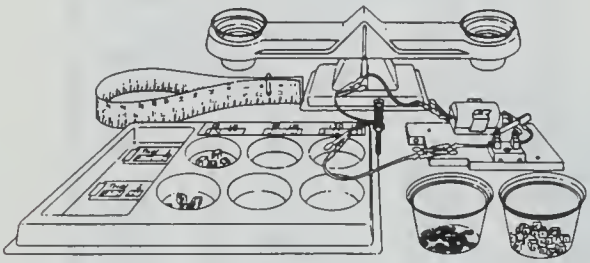
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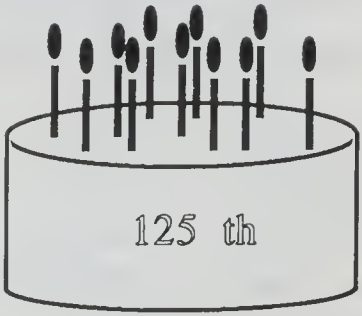
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Larry, Marsha, Tracie, and Benjamin

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on
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Gerri & Marvin Soroken

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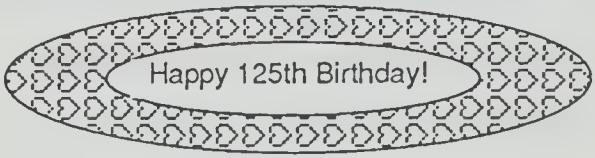
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Parents of Hector Smith
Dick and Bobby Smith

(415) 796-7744

Ramey's Hallmark Shop

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Congratulations to all
on this Special Occasion

The Pickton Family

Best Wishes To CSB
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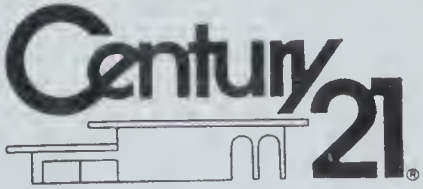
JOHN H. EWAN
Owner - Manager

4067 FREMONT HUB
FREMONT, CALIFORNIA
Phone 793-9088

Congratulations and
Best Wishes
to C.S.B.

Lee Nullmeyer & Family

Put Number 1 to work for you.®



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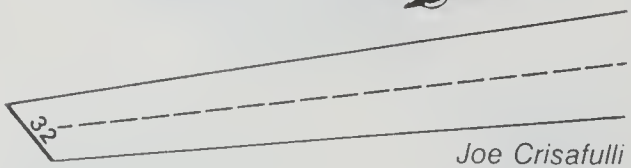
Owner
Amar Amrik
Amar and Amrik

Mission Valley
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RUNWAY 32 PIZZERIA

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Joe Crisafulli

Tri-Cities Children's Center, Inc.



Congratulations

The George Fujimoto Family
Congratulates
C.S.B.
on it's
125th Birthday

HAPPY 125TH BIRTHDAY
TO C.S.B.
FROM: Paul, Silvana,
and Gregory Sung

CONGRATULATIONS
C.S.B.

From the
Cragen Family
Chris, Tisha, Jonathan
& Rachel

In appreciation and promise of
Quality Residential Education and
care of visually impaired children.

Mr. & Mrs. Gary A. Todd

Congratulations
to C.S.B.

Virginia Holloway & Family

CONGRATULATIONS
C.S.B
ON YOUR
125TH BIRTHDAY

THE ROESSING FAMILY



"The world at her fingertips!"

The New School Song

Lift up your voices and sing a joyful song
Over the fields and to the hills beyond
Stand proud and brave with voices firm, and strong.
Singing of friendship to those who now move on.
Hold your head high, the future is the key.
Keep your mind open and try your best to be,
Honest and kind to all that you may see,
Remembering forever your days at C.S.B.
And be proud, and be proud, and be proud.

Superintendents
California School for the Blind

Dr. Richard S. French 1922 - 1949
Dr. Berthold Lowenfeld 1979 - 1964
Dr. Everett Wilcox 1964 - 1979
Ms. Jeanne Vlachos 1979 - 1986
Mr. Charles Boyer 1986 -

In Appreciation

The Historical Committee wishes to thank the following people for their special contributions to this book; Sylvia Brosamer, George Fogarty, Andrew Laird, Shailer Pickton, Dr. Everett Wilcox.

The Alumni, Parents and Friends of

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL for the BLIND

invite you to join them for a

DEDICATION / CELEBRATION

honoring the 125 years of service
to all the people of California.

Friday, November 21, 1986

Open House and Campus Tours 1:00 p.m.

Dedication Ceremonies 2:30 p.m.

California School for the Blind
500 Walnut Avenue
Fremont, California 94536

R.S.V.P. (415) 794-3816

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